

March 4, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC - Yesterday, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) voted in support of the Keeping All Students Safe Act (H.R. 4247), which would provide federal oversight and accountability to protect students from the use of harmful restraints and seclusion in schools.

"Every child should be safe and protected while in school," **said Arcuri, who worked to establish the Oneida County Child Advocacy Center during his time as District Attorney**. "It is wholly unacceptable for the egregious abuse of a child to take place under the guise of discipline. The GAO's report made it clear that federal action is needed. This bi-partisan legislation would, for the first time, protect all children in schools from abusive - and in some cases deadly - use of seclusion and restraint and ensure that schools in every state have the resources they need to prevent this from ever happening to our children."

Last year, an investigation by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found hundreds of allegations that children have been abused, and some even died, as a result of misuses of restraint and seclusion in public and private schools, often at the hands of untrained staff. Many of these interventions were used disproportionately on children with disabilities.

Unlike in hospitals and other facilities that receive federal funding, there are currently no federal laws that address how and when restraint or seclusion can be used in schools. State regulations and oversight vary greatly and have often failed to protect children. It is also impossible to determine the full extent to which these interventions are used because there is currently no consistent reporting of data.

The Keeping All Students Safe Act establishes necessary minimum safety standards to prevent harmful restraint and seclusion in schools. It limits physical restraint and locked seclusion, allowing these interventions only when there is imminent danger of injury, and only when imposed by trained staff.

This bill also provides states with resources to help train staff so that they are prepared to deal with any situation that may arise. It also instructs states to produce yearly reports on the

number and type of restraints or seclusion used, and requires schools to notify parents after incidence when restraints or seclusion was used.

The Keeping All Students Safe Act has the support of nearly 100 organizations, including the National School Boards Association and the American Federation of Teachers. This legislation passed the floor of the House of Representatives today with a vote of 262-153.

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